



**CITY OF ASTORIA**  
Founded 1811 – Incorporated 1856

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Representative Nancy Nathanson, chair  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB2449

Madam Chair Representative Nathanson, Members of the House Revenue Committee,

Astoria 911 is located within Clatsop County and we serve 3 law enforcement agencies as well as 8 fire departments. We are responsible for answering and dispatching calls for Astoria, Warrenton and the unincorporated areas of Clatsop County. Our jurisdictional population is about 28,000 people, however it can easily double with tourism on any given weekend or season. We answered approximately 79,000 calls in 2018. Our citizens have expectations that these calls be answered and dispatched in a timely manner. Our dispatchers and user agencies (law enforcement, fire, EMS) have expectations that we have a reliable infrastructure and the technology to provide these services.

The state of Oregon has had the same 0.75 cent 9-1-1 tax since 1995, when it was first introduced. That is over 20 years ago. A lot has changed over the past 20 years for 9-1-1 and there are a lot of changes on the horizon, especially with technology. In addition to the technology, our operational needs and personnel costs are growing each year. Because of those costs, we rely heavily on the distribution of 9-1-1 taxes. The current 9-1-1 taxes only cover 18% of our annual operating expense, with local agencies making up the difference.

PSAP's are not the only entities affected by the 9-1-1 tax. We were recently notified that the costs associated with equipment upgrades and other important needs may no longer be fully funded by the state 9-1-1 program. Due to this, the costs will be absorbed by the PSAP's themselves who in turn may look to user agencies to assist with the funds. Astoria 911 is coming up on its 5 year phone system upgrade, however

we are in jeopardy of having that pushed to 7 years. Astoria 911's phone system is the only one in the state that has several single points of failure. That is unacceptable, especially considering that we are isolated on the coast and most of our jurisdiction is situated in the tsunami inundation zone.

In the end, this is not just about Astoria 911. This is about all of the Oregon PSAP's. This is about the law enforcement, fire and EMS agencies the PSAP's serve, who in turn serve the citizens of Oregon. The citizens of Oregon deserve quick, efficient and reliable emergency assistance.

In order to maintain and build upon what Oregonians deserve, Astoria 9-1-1 and its subscriber board, respectfully request your support of HB2449 to increase 9-1-1 tax to \$1.50.

We also respectfully request your support in removing the following provisions from HB2449:

- The amount for Oregon Emergency Management 9-1-1 program from 4% to 2%
- Reduce the amount collected by the Department of Revenue from 1% to 0.5%

We would also ask your consideration to add language that would specifically allow interest earned on the 9-1-1 tax to be held in an account to be used for future system upgrades. This would support technological advances requiring significant infrastructure buildouts and improvements.

HB2449 will help us ensure the communities we serve can continue to rely on 9-1-1. We are there to answer the call for help, we respectfully ask that our call for help, in turn, is answered.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

*Candace Pozdolski*

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Astoria 911

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